

## SEPTIC TANK DRAIN FIELD PIPE MANIFOLD SYSTEM AND METHOD OF USE

### Cross-Reference to Related Applications

**[0001]** This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/395,817, filed July 15, 2002 for Septic Tank Drain Field Manifold System and Method of Use, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

### Field of the Invention

**[0002]** This invention relates to septic tank drain fields and, more particularly, to a multi port manifold pipe for providing equal distribution of septic tank effluent to all connecting pipes within the drain field.

### Background of the Invention

**[0003]** Septic tank drain fields generally comprise a network of trenches dug on suitable land adjacent the septic tank. Distribution pipes are placed into these trenches and connected to the septic tank for receiving effluent therefrom. These distribution pipes are preferably joined together by pipe manifolds that aid in distribution of the effluent to a plurality of distribution pipes. The skilled will appreciate that in laying out such a network of effluent distribution pipes, it is necessary to ensure proper alignment of the network lies within a calculated horizontal range so as to ensure even flow of the effluent from the septic tank to final discharge points. In addition, it would be preferable to include structural features in the distribution pipes, pipe manifolds that would aid in the even distribution of effluent throughout the drainpipe system.

### Summary of the Invention

**[0004]** With the foregoing in mind, an embodiment of the present invention provides a multi port manifold for distribution of septic tank effluent in a drain

field. The manifold may comprise an elongate tubular body having a first longitudinal port and an opposing second longitudinal port for providing fluid flow through the body along its longitudinal axis. The elongate tubular body may include at least one effluent retention portion and at least one conduit portion, wherein the conduit portion has a girth less than that of the retention portion. One embodiment of the manifold may include a first transverse port positioned between the first and second longitudinal ports for providing a transverse fluid flow from the first retention portion of the effluent retention portion. The first transverse port may have an axis within a plane of and generally orthogonal to the longitudinal axis. A second transverse port may be positioned between the first transverse port and the first and second longitudinal ports for providing a second transverse fluid flow from a second retention portion. The second transverse port may have an axis within the plane of and generally orthogonal to the longitudinal axis. Opposing first and second ribs extend outwardly from an outside surface of the conduit portion of the tubular body. The first and second ribs may radially extend from the longitudinal axis and may be orthogonal to the plane having the transverse port axes and longitudinal axis.

**[0005]** A method aspect of the invention may include connecting multiple manifolds for providing a drain field effluent retention and distribution system. The transverse ports may be arranged for providing a uniform alignment of drain field distribution pipe using a single manifold construction while connection multiple manifolds in a right side up and up side down arrangement for achieving a desired distribution.

**[0006]** The manifold may include structural features for the manifold to hold approximately 1½" of fluid at all times, to thereby aid in equal distribution of effluent to all connecting drain field pipes. The ribs allow the manifold to be held in place by a clamp described by way of example in U.S. Patent No. 6,120,209 for Method of Installing Drain field pipe, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference.

**Brief Description of the Drawings**

**[0007]** Embodiments of the invention are described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

**[0008]** FIG. 1 is a perspective view of one embodiment of the present invention illustrating a manifold having inlet and outlet ports extending along a longitudinal axis and three transverse distribution ports;

**[0009]** FIG. 2 is a top plan view of the embodiment of FIG. 1;

**[0010]** FIG. 3 is a rear elevation view of the embodiment of FIG. 1;

**[0011]** FIG. 4 is a connection (inlet) port elevation end view of the embodiment of FIG. 1;

**[0012]** FIG. 5 is a partial side cut-away elevation view of a septic tank and drain field system operable with the manifold embodiment of FIG. 1;

**[0013]** FIG. 6 is a partial top plan view of the system of FIG. 5;

**[0014]** FIG. 7 is a second embodiment of FIG. 1 including closed distribution and connection ports, wherein selected ports are cut open for operation in a desired drain field distribution;

**[0015]** FIG. 8 is a partial cross-section view of the embodiment of FIG. 7 further illustrating the closed ports;

**[0016]** FIG. 9 is a partial plan view of one drain field system illustrating one use of the embodiments of the present invention, herein presented by way of example, wherein the drain field includes a center located manifold.

**[0017]** FIG. 10 is a partial elevation view illustrating use of a pipe installation clamp for securing a manifold prior to filling the drain field with gravel; and

**[0018]** FIGS. 11 and 12 are schematic illustrations of various manifold connection combinations useful in constructing a desired drain field pipe distribution.

**Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments**

**[0019]** The following illustrates the principles, practice, and applications of methods constituting this invention. While this invention is satisfied by embodiments in many different forms, there will herein be described in detail

certain embodiments of the invention, with the understanding that the present disclosure is to be considered as exemplary of the principles of the invention and is not intended to limit the invention to the embodiments illustrated and described.

**[0020]** With reference initially to FIGS. 1-3, one embodiment of a manifold **10** includes an elongate tubular body **12** having a first longitudinal port **14** and an opposing second longitudinal port **16** for providing fluid flow through the body along a longitudinal axis **18**. The elongate tubular body **12** may include a first effluent retention portion **20** and a first conduit portion **22**. As illustrated, the conduit portion **22** has a girth **23** less than that of the retention portion **20**. For the embodiment herein described by way of example, the manifold **10** also includes second and third retention portions **24**, **26**, respectively, and a second conduit portion **28**.

**[0021]** With reference continued again to FIGS. 1-3 and to FIG. 4, a first transverse port **30** is positioned between the first and second longitudinal ports **14**, **16** for providing a transverse fluid flow from the first effluent retention portion **20**. The first transverse port **30** has an axis **32** within a plane of and generally orthogonal to the longitudinal axis **18**. As herein described by way of example for the embodiment described, second and third transverse ports **34**, **36**, respectively are positioned between the first transverse port **30** and the first and second longitudinal ports **14**, **16** for providing an alternate transverse fluid flow from the second and third retention portions **24**, **26**, the second and third transverse ports having axes **38**, **40** within the plane of and generally orthogonal to the longitudinal axis **18**.

**[0022]** With reference again to FIGS. 1-3, opposing first and second ribs **42**, **44** and third and fourth opposing ribs **46**, **48** extend radially outwardly from an outside surface of the conduit portions **22**, **28** of the tubular body **12**. The ribs **42-44** are orthogonal to the plane having the transverse port axes **32**, **38**, **40** and longitudinal axis **18** therein.

**[0023]** As illustrated with reference to FIGS. 5 and 6, the manifold **10** may use the first and second longitudinal ports **14**, **16** as inlet and outlet ports for

connection to each other as cooperating manifolds with the multiple transverse ports used for connecting to drain field effluent distribution pipe **50** and a septic tank **52** in a drain field system **54**.

**[0024]** With reference again to FIGS. 2 and 3, the manifold **10** as herein described has a top plan view being a mirror image of its bottom plan view. Further, reference to septic distribution port and drain field distribution ports are provided for description only and in fact may be connected as desired to either the septic tank or drain field pipe as will herein later be described in greater detail. By way of example only, the transverse ports **32, 34, 36** herein described have peripheral flanges providing a female connection to flexible drain field pipe typically used and known in the art. The first and second longitudinal ports **14, 16** are herein described by way of example to have alternate female and male connection for connection to the drain field pipe element or to cooperating connected manifolds as above described. Further, and as illustrated again with reference to FIG. 1 by way of example, locking tabs are provided within the walls of the distribution ports including locking tabs **58** for attaching to corrugated pipe inserted therein as do the inlet and outlet connection ports herein described. It is expected that various connection styles will come to the mind of the reader and those skilled in the art for using manifold configurations so desired.

**[0025]** With reference again to FIG. 3, by installing the manifold **10** or multiple manifolds as earlier described in a level position, effluent **60** from the septic tank is retained within the effluent retention areas proximate each of the distribution ports. In addition, retaining effluent within the manifold as herein described minimizes effluent surging into the distribution field, and provides an improved gravity dosing of the effluent by volume. Typically, equal dosing requires pumping of effluent. Such an arrangement allows for a uniform distribution into the drain field pipe **50** connected to the transverse ports **30, 34, 36** during typical operation of a septic tank drain field system **54** using corrugated pipe for holding effluent therein and distributing the effluent through holes located along pipe section side portions as described in FIGS. 5 and 6

and in U.S. Patent No. 6,120,209 by way of example. The use of the manifold **10** and multiple manifolds connected for providing the manifold described earlier with reference to FIGS. 5 and 6 allow for the use of the corrugated pipe and provide the desired assurance that effluent will be retained and distributed uniformly throughout a drain field.

**[0026]** In order to accommodate variations in use of the manifold **10** for connecting multiple manifolds together to form a desired manifold pipe, an embodiment of the manifold device is formed having closed ports or end portions **62** for all ports including the transverse distribution ports and the inlet and outlet ports as illustrated by way of example with reference to FIGS. 7 and 8. As a result, the manifold **10** may be used in combinations the permit a desired distribution of drain field pipe as earlier described with reference to FIGS. 5 and 6, or as desired as illustrated by way of further example with reference to the tank **52**, manifolds **10**, and pipe **50** of FIG. 9.

**[0027]** As described in U.S. Patent No. 6,120,209 to Evens, drain field pipe having a rib radially extending from its wall may be supported by a clamping device **64** illustrated by way of example with reference to FIG. 10 that includes a pair of elongated anchor members **66** generally parallel to each other and separated for receiving the drain field pipe therebetween and suspending the pipe from its rib which extends radially outward along its longitudinal axis. The elongated anchor members **66** penetrate a grade surface of the ground **68** for holding the anchor-members upright while securing the pipe rib within the clamp above the grade surface at a desired level and orientation. A clamp **70** is attached to the anchor members **66** upper portion and holds the rib between clamp jaws. Installing drain field pipe by supporting the pipe from the radially extending rib permits the pipe to be held at the desired positions for introduction of aggregate into an absorption area containing the drain field pipe without displacing the connected pipe from the desired location. With the rib positioned upward and away from the drain field surface, the support devices holding the pipe are removed after the aggregate is placed within the drain field and around the pipe without displacing the pipe.

**[0028]** By way of example and with reference again to FIGS. 1 and 10, the ribs **42-48** within the manifold **10** are above the conduit portions **22, 28**, which conduit portions are dimensioned to closely approximate the dimension of the corrugated pipe being installed within the drain field. As a result, the clamping devices **64** used to support the drain field pipe at the desired location and elevation may also be used during the installation of the drain field to support the multiple manifolds connected to each other for forming the manifold pipe and thus provide easy installation and alignment of the drain field piping system including the manifold and corrugated piping. Based on the above described embodiment and details for the manifold device, various combinations will come to the mind of those skilled in the art.

**[0029]** By way of example, and with reference to FIGS. 11 and 12, various combinations of the same manifold **10** positioned in an upright **10U** or inverted position **10D** may be connected to a similar manifold device carried in yet same or inverted position for providing a distribution scheme desirable for the user. As illustrated with reference to FIG. 11, by way of example, a single input distribution port **72** is used from the septic tank for providing effluent to four manifolds connected along their longitudinal axes while allowing six distribution ports **74** to distribute effluent to connected septic tank piping. For the example herein described with reference to FIG. 11, the distribution ports on the side of the septic tank will remain closed except for that connection to be made to the septic tank itself. Yet other possibilities will come to the mind of the reader as exemplified in FIG. 12 wherein one port coming from septic tank in a center manifold device is used to provide four distribution ports to the distribution piping by having left and right manifolds inverted and connected to the center manifold device. Reference to FIGS. 9, 11, and 12 illustrate using letter designations "B" and "T" for ease of reference to a bottom view and a top view as will be appreciated with reference to FIGS. 1-3. With such an arrangement manifolds may be connected as B-T-B-T as in FIG. 11, B-T-B as in FIG. 12, or others such as T-T-B and alike as may be desired.

**[0030]** Yet further combinations of uses will come to the mind of the reader having had the advantage of the teachings of the present invention. By way of example, it may be desired to have the manifold pipe located within a central portion of the drain field to allow for a specific distribution of effluent from the septic tank through the centrally located manifold pipe and outwardly to the drain field pipe extending radially from the longitudinal axis of the multiple manifold devices.